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Comparative Religion Notes.

Current Studies in Comparative Religion.—Under the auspices of the "American Society of Comparative Religion" a "Congress of Religions" was held at Long Beach, Long Island, August 5–11 of the present year. The special lecturer was the Rev. Joseph Cook, who spoke on "The World's First Parliament of Religions" and other topics concerned equally with Christian thought and life. Other topics and speakers were, "Confucianism as Ethics and Religion," by the Rev. George W. Knox, D.D.; "Theosophy and Christianity Irreconcilable," by the Rev. C. R. Blauvelt, Ph.D.; "Contacts and Divergencies of the Ethnic Religions and their Relations to Christianity," by the Rev. F. F. Ellinwood, D.D.; "Survivals of Zoroastrianism," by the Rev. A. H. McKinney, Ph.D.; "Mohammedanism in Africa," by the Rev. A. P. Atterbury, D.D.; "The Strongholds of Islam: are they Impregnable?" by Professor J. S. Dennis, D.D.; "A Comparison of the Hindoo Schools of Philosophy with Western Thought," by Professor S. L. Beiler, Ph.D.; "The Fetish," by the Rev. D. J. Burrell, D.D.

Announcements are made respecting the fall meetings of the "American Society of Comparative Religion" as follows: September 24th, Rev. J. W. Brooks, "Revised Aryanism"; October 29th, Rev. R. MacQuesten, "The Early Religions of Mexico and South America"; November 26th, Rev. H. T. McEwen, "The Permanent Elements in Religion"; December 17th, Rev. H. H. Sleeper, "The Linga Cult in India and its Influence on other Religions." These addresses are delivered at the Assembly Room of the Methodist Book Concern, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Some Recent Articles.—The recent articles on our topic in popular and scientific periodicals have been very abundant. We will attempt to indicate the contents and value of some of them as illustrative of the amount of interest and thought which this field attracts.

Astronomy and Religion. By Sir Edwin Arnold, in *The North American Review*, October, pp. 404–415. In vague and swelling language he demands that the discoveries of astronomy respecting the insignificance of our earth in comparison with the systems of the universe influence our Christianity; asserts that religion can no longer centre about the earth and man; that the "plan of salvation" dwindles to its proper insignificance when we think that God—"that most vast and vague name of God"—is the Savior of all the other worlds. There is some truth here, but it has been said before in such works as Mitchell's *Astronomy and the Bible*, where the other side of the case is also presented, here omitted.

Astronomy of the Incas. By M. Jean Du Gourcq, in *The Popular Science Monthly*, October, pp. 823-832. Is translated from the French, and poorly done, the meaning being unintelligible sometimes. Illustrates vividly the close relation of primitive religion and astronomy. Inca culture closely connected with their observation of times and seasons. Solstitial festivals observed with strange customs; at the September festival the participants struck one another with whips of burning straw, bathed in running water, sacrificed one hundred white llamas, kept intoxicated for four days. The moon was regarded as male; the daughter of the king, enamored of him, leaped from a high mountain as he passed and became united with him, recognized as a moon spot. Was also regarded as female, the first wife of the sun god. The phases of the moon were connected with the idea of resurrection, its disappearance beyond the snowy mountains was but for three days, then it rose again. The eclipse of the moon was feared, since it would die and fall on the earth and destroy the inhabitants; hence as an eclipse began a great din was raised, dogs—animals sacred to the moon—were made to howl, and thus the moon induced to struggle for life. These ideas and practices find their counterparts all over the world. In the frequency and character of their festivals the Incas resembled the ancient Romans.

Where the Teak Wood Grows. By M. M. Pope, in *The Century Magazine*, October, pp. 890-895. Has a suggestive paragraph respecting two of these great trees which watch over a Buddhist shrine in Aloung-dah-katapoh, which has no priest and is distant one hundred miles from human habitation. It contains a recumbent Buddha of colossal size. Thither come pilgrims and paste sheets of gold leaf onto the image. Part of this gold covering, now of great thickness, was stolen last year—by foreigners?—but has been restored by a body of pilgrims organized for that purpose. Another Buddhist shrine and place of pilgrimage is described in **A Journey to the Sacred Mountain in China**, by A. H. Savage-Landor, in *Fortnightly Review*, September, pp. 393-409. The purpose of the visitor in seeking this place was neither religious nor scientific, and it is amusing to note how little of real value to the scientific student he saw. Like many other English tourists, we imagine, he wanted the glory of having scrambled up the mountain. It is 12,000 feet high. At the top he found a small wooden shrine three feet square, six feet high, within it some poor bronze images of Buddha with holes near the base for stuffing paper prayers into the image. One fact he mentions—that evil spirits in China travel only in straight lines, hence if one erects a wall before the door of his house they cannot find their way within. The same phenomenon is observed by Carl Lumholtz in his **Tarahumari Dances and Plant Worship**, in *Scribner's Magazine*, October, pp. 438-456. These Indians of the Sierra Madre Mountains build fences before the doors of their houses to keep the smallpox out. They have also various charms on the doors to frighten the evil spirits away. Their most characteristic religious phenomena are the use of beer in the sacred ceremonies, the emphasis laid on sacred dances, and the

worship of sacred plants, some forms of cacti called Hakori which live several months after being dug up and are thought to be gods. The whole description is most instructive. Why does Lumboltz call these fellows "pagans" and "heathen" so often? Is it German deference to American orthodoxy?

West African Folklore. By Col. A. B. Ellis, in *Popular Science Monthly*, October, pp. 771-783. Denies that these Africans are fetish worshipers, and asserts that they are pure animists, worshiping spirits. Presents some amusing examples of their folklore to prove that they are not so degraded in religion as was supposed.

Funeral Customs of the World. By J. H. Long, in *Popular Science Monthly*, October, pp. 806-812. Is evidently the work of an amateur, pious, widely read, but not sure of his facts. Asserts that the care of the dead is a sign of a people's standing in the scale of civilization. Classifies the methods into three: (1) simple closing up of the body in earth or stone—earliest and most common. (2) Burning the body and entombing the cinders. This was the prevailing way in the Roman Empire, but Christianity stopped it on account of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. (3) Embalming—characteristic especially of Egypt. Under this head the apocryphal stories about a judgment of the dead man before burial, and the placing of the mummy in the seat of honor in the banquet hall are stated as sober truth. All these customs are regarded as an argument in favor of immortality.

The Alleged Sojourn of Christ in India. By Max Müller, in *Nineteenth Century*, October, pp. 515-522. Demolishes with good-humored sarcasm and keen analysis the claims of the Russian fabrication of M. Notovitch. Closes up with a letter from an Englishwoman at the scene of the alleged manuscript discovery, in which the sensible writer remarks that she is beginning to suspect that "the mysteries of esoteric Buddhism are frauds." Yet among us, men, apparently of sound mind, are today being hoodwinked into believing the Munchausen tales of a man who has been to Lassa and talked with a marvelous seven-year-old Lama who can speak all languages? And yet "no Englishman ever got to Lassa." Did our German-American friend get there?

Lafcadio Hearn has been **At Hakata** *Atlantic Monthly*, October, pp. 510-514. He has been profoundly impressed with the vitality of Buddhism, because in this Japanese town he saw a Buddha head in a temple of the Jodo sect, which was made out of bronze mirrors contributed by devout women, and about whose base lay multitudes more of these mirrors which are to constitute the trunk of the image, all to be thirty-five feet high. He is more sensible when he turns to the study of the use of these mirrors in religion, but, alas! not much more instructive, for after suggesting their magical character and noting the fact that they are sometimes buried with the dead, he wanders off again into moralizing. A thoroughly instructive insight into Buddhism is given in **The Religion of Gotama Buddha**, by William Davies, in *Atlantic Monthly*, September, pp. 334-339. The writer's idea was to illustrate the point of view of Bud-

dham and interpret its spirit. He has done so by a body of full quotation from the earliest documents, with explanatory comments. He denies the esoteric element in Buddhism proper, wherein he is perfectly right. With sober judgment he finds Christianity superior to Buddhism in its ability to combine with social progress, in its loving, helpful temper, in the universality of its spirit—Buddhism does not have a really broad spirit—and in the dignity and nobility of Jesus Christ with whom Buddha, great as he is, cannot compare. In conclusion, he raises a note of warning against taking poetical and late representations of Buddhism as the basis of information and judgment, and urges study of the most literal translations of the most trustworthy material. A fair hit at Sir Edwin Arnold and "The Light of Asia"!

Mohammedanism receives its fair share of attention, especially from apologists for it among its own numbers and friends outside. Among the latter was Professor Max Müller, in an article written some months ago, respecting his visit to Constantinople. It appeared too long ago to come under our review here, but it receives the attention of the Rev. B. F. Kidder in **Intemperance and Immorality in Mohammedan Countries**, *Homiletic Review*, October, pp. 372-376. It appears that the Oxford professor fell into a trap and was shown the best side of the system in order that he might be suitably impressed and thus influence others. Mr. Kidder shows the other side in most vigorous and picturesque language. The impression produced is painful yet enlightening. Probably the truth lies between the two extreme views. It would be foolish to deny that the moral system of Islam, while simple and forcible, is yet only fit for a people just emerging from half-civilized life. Such a system does well what it proposes to do, but the trouble is with what it does not propose to do. Yet our Mohammedan friends and their apologists will still persist in quibbling over texts in the Quran and holding up the glorious example of the Moors in Spain, to whom be all honor! Such work we find in **Did Omar destroy the Alexandrian Library?** by R. Vasendeva Rau, Hyderabad, India, in *The Nineteenth Century*, October, pp. 555-571. He emphasizes the lateness of the testimony which appears nearly four centuries after the alleged occurrence, and quotes with appreciation such writers as Gibbon, Buckle, and Draper—which shows the company he keeps! Then he turns off to castigate the sins of Christianity and invites those who are horrified at the Moslem massacres of infidels to contemplate the work of the Inquisition. His idea of the Moslem theory is this: "When the idolaters and polytheists had been extirpated from Arabia the intolerant zeal of the Moslems was converted into the steady and wise policy of allowing the conquered nations to retain their freedom of conscience and religious worship on payment of tribute." Interesting testimony is borne also by Napoleon Ney in an article on **Mussulman Secret Societies** in *The Cosmopolitan*, September, pp. 556-569. The writer, a French military officer, in his training, is now apparently a Mussulman, at least in sympathies, and a member of one of the secret organizations which he describes. He represents the Mohammedan world

as honeycombed with them, all with one aim, the destruction of the infidel and the extension of Islam. Eight of these brotherhoods are found foremost in North Africa, the greatest of which is that of Sedi Mohammed el Senoussi. The son of its founder is its present chief, and commands half the Mussulman world. M. Ney urges us not "to confound the political and religious Mohammedan sects, which, under the cloak of religion, sow the seeds of hate and carry on a propaganda hostile to the Christians, with the Mussulman religion proper, tolerant and altruistic beyond most religions." Mr. J. Theo. Bent and his wife found something of the spirit of Islam in a visit which is described in **The Hadramut, a Journey in Southern Arabia**, in *The Nineteenth Century*, September, pp. 419-437. This wonderful region is inhabited by a population which in many sections is intensely fanatical, and the lives of the travelers were often threatened, and prayers offered up in the mosques against them. A curious custom is mentioned—the children are provided, during the holy month Ramadan, with miniature mosques, which they light up and with which they are encouraged to "play mosque."

Two articles deal with that great and unique phenomenon of current religious life—the Parliament of Religions. The first is called **Echoes of the Parliament of Religions**, by Prince Serge Wolkonsky, in *The Century Magazine*, October, pp. 901, 902. By his attitude and words in the Parliament the prince impressed one as rather radical than religious. His article confirms that impression. Three lessons were learned, according to him: (1) Consciousness of our Christian divisions. (2) Changelessness of certain fundamental qualities of human nature, by which the equality of all men is proclaimed; notable among these qualities is religious feeling, common to humanity. (3) The "declassification" of our human brother, *i. e.*, we are all brothers first and some of us Christians afterward. Rev. Dr. J. H. Barrows, writing on **The Results of the Parliament of Religions** in *The Forum*, September, pp. 54-67, gathers a great mass of testimony which has reached him relative to the meaning and issues of this assembly. He sums up these results in the following way: (1) An interest in Comparative Religion was aroused. (2) The Orientals were impressed with the fraternity and love of Christians. (3) A new and humaner interest in foreign missions was produced. (4) A better understanding between Protestants and Catholics in America was established. (5) All Christianity was brought together and shown its essential unity in the ideals of faith and duty. (6) The ethical unity of the civilized world was emphasized. This article, in its insight and broad charity, together with its mass of facts relative to interest in our science, may well close these notes on recent periodical literature in Comparative Religion.

A New Course of Lectures.—A committee of American scholars, consisting of such gentlemen as President Schurman of Cornell University, Professors Toy of Harvard, Haupt of Johns Hopkins, Hooper of Brooklyn Institute, and others, has been for some time arranging for yearly courses of lectures on the

History of Religions, to be given by eminent scholars in Europe and America. This movement has culminated in the securing of Professor Rhys Davids, the eminent student of Buddhism. He will deliver six lectures, first at Cornell University, beginning November 1st, and will repeat the course in whole or in part, at the Lowell Institute of Boston, Brown University, Peabody Institute of Baltimore, in Philadelphia, at Columbia College, and the Brooklyn Institute. The general subject is the History and Literature of Buddhism, and the special topics are (1) "Sketch of the Evolution of Religious Thought in India with special reference to Buddhism;" (2) "The Authorities on which Knowledge of Buddhism is based;" (3) "The Life of Buddha;" (4) "The Buddhist Secret. Part I. The Secret of Life, the Four Truths, and the Noble Eightfold Path;" (5) "The Buddhist Secret. Part II. The Mystic Trance of the Arhatship;" (6) "The Ideal of the Later Buddhism—the Greater Vehicle and what it means." Professor Rhys Davids is an attractive lecturer, and a learned, yet interesting writer. He will thus introduce a course of yearly lectures which, it is hoped, will attract the attention of educated persons and interest them on these great subjects. Professor Tiele of Leyden has been spoken of as another possible lecturer in the near future. It is exceedingly desirable that such an enterprise be generously supported, so that it may become established on a permanent basis.